Ministry of Agriculture

Plan for 2013-14

Government of Saskatchewan

PLAN FOR 2013-14

Statement from the Minister

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Agriculture's Plan for 2013-14.

The Government's Direction and Budget for 2013-14 are built on the principle of *Balanced Growth*, supporting an ongoing focus on sound economic growth and shared prosperity. Agriculture is an integral part of our Saskatchewan Plan for Growth. Our goals are to increase crop production by 10 million tonnes; increase agri-food exports by 50 per cent; establish Saskatchewan as a global leader in bioscience; and increase value-added opportunities, all by 2020.

The 2013-14 Ministry of Agriculture Budget is $406.9M, one of the five largest budgets in history, all since we formed government in 2007. About 69 per cent of this budget will go toward fully funding business risk management programs including AgriStability, AgriInvest and Crop Insurance. The Crop Insurance program includes another record budget of $198 million, as well as record coverage for producers. Since 2008, we have introduced the six largest budgets and highest coverage levels in the program's history.

We are increasing funding for strategic initiatives that will help the sector be more competitive in the long term. We are providing more than $70 million in the areas of agriculture innovation, research and technology transfer; environment; farm business management; rural water infrastructure; food safety, plant and animal health; value-added business development; trade and market development; and agriculture awareness initiatives.

These investments will help producers, the industry and the Province meet our ambitious growth targets. The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2013-14 Annual Report.

The Honourable Lyle Stewart
Minister of Agriculture

Response to Government Direction

The government remains committed to further establishing Saskatchewan as the best place to live, work and raise a family.

The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond identifies principles, goals and actions to ensure Saskatchewan continues to benefit from the opportunities and meet the challenges of a growing province. Keeping government's focus on *Balanced Growth*, the plan outlines the key activities that the Government of Saskatchewan will undertake in pursuit of sustained, disciplined growth and a better Saskatchewan.

Government's Vision

"...a strong and growing Saskatchewan, the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Improving our quality of life	Making life more affordable	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to focus on achieving greater success in the delivery of government services. *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond* provides the enabling strategies and actions that the Government of Saskatchewan will undertake to build a strong and growing Saskatchewan. The 2013-14 budget theme of *Balanced Growth* reflects the government's commitment to achieving the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth.

All ministries and agencies will report on progress and results achieved in their 2013-14 annual reports. This honours government's commitment to keep its promises and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mission, Strategies and Actions

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture is to enable a prosperous, market-driven agricultural industry through a supportive legislative framework, policies, programs and services.

Strategy

Enhanced long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the industry

Key Actions

Targeted investment in infrastructure, science and innovation.

- Develop and implement programs to support the goals of the federal-provincial Growing Forward 2 Policy Framework.
- Invest in wheat genomic research and the Global Institute for Food Security.
- Develop strategies to promote and facilitate innovation within the sector.
- Invest in irrigation and rural water infrastructure.
- Build and implement sector strategies in the crops, livestock and value-added areas that increase revenues and exports for Saskatchewan, and contribute to the benefits of growing demand for food, feed, fuel and fibre.
- Develop a new five-year research plan for Strategic Research Program Chairs at the University of Saskatchewan and the Western Beef Development Centre.

Strategy

Enhanced trade advocacy

Key Actions

Support industry to enhance trade in priority markets.

- Implement strategies and policies in international market development and investment attraction.
- Pursue Saskatchewan's trade policy objectives through international and internal dispute settlement proceedings and day-to-day trade policy advocacy.
- Build industry's capacity to promote Saskatchewan agricultural exports in key markets.

Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine site

Strategy

Enhanced client service

Key Actions

Efficiently develop and deliver effective programs and services.

- Ensure farmers, ranchers and industry have access to research, production and business information, risk management tools and Ministry services.
- Develop and implement innovative ways of offering branch and Ministry services.
- Review and reform legislation, regulation, policy and services.
- Facilitate the transition of land formerly operated under the federal Community Pasture Program back to the Province and to patron operation.

Strategy

Improved public perception of agriculture

Key Actions

Partner to promote the benefits of agriculture.

- Implement a comprehensive strategy to enhance the awareness of agriculture as a solution provider, environmental stewards of land and livestock, producer of safe and healthy food, economic engine, and foundation for future opportunity.
- Partner with stakeholders to provide enhanced education programming and training.
- Identify and promote opportunities for youth in agriculture.

Performance Measures

Measure

Percentage of clients satisfied with programs and services.

2012 Client Services Survey: A total of 1,002 surveys were completed. According to the survey, 66 per cent of producers surveyed were satisfied with Saskatchewan Agriculture.

2008 Client Services Survey: A total of 753 producers were surveyed in March 2008. According to the survey, 39 per cent of producers who have accessed Saskatchewan Agriculture programs and services answered either satisfied or completely satisfied to the following question:

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Saskatchewan Agriculture service delivery, using a five point scale where one means not satisfied at all and five means completely satisfied?

Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Measure Description

This measure is intended to assess the percentage of clients satisfied with the programs and services delivered by the Ministry.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture offers many programs and services designed to assist farmers and ranchers, including a wide variety of publications (both print and electronic), customer service telephone lines, specialist services and program development.

Technological advancements in areas such as social media, mobile phones, e-tablets and online transacting are happening at a rapid pace. As technology changes, the Ministry needs to update its service and information delivery systems to ensure clients' needs are being met, and programs and services are supportive of their overall agricultural operations.

A formal survey of client experiences with Ministry programs and services took place in 2012. The survey provides a performance indicator that will help Ministry officials gauge customer service and satisfaction, and will provide a benchmark for future years. The Ministry engaged a professional research firm in order to ensure accurate and reliable data was obtained, with the understanding that all scientific surveys contain an inherent margin of error.

Survey Objectives

The objectives of the client services survey were to provide information to the Ministry in order to:

- understand which programs and services are being utilized by the farming community, and then determine if these services are meeting client needs;
- understand how technologically advanced farm households are in Saskatchewan and understand which methods of communication they prefer;
- gain insight concerning producers' overall opinion of the Ministry service delivery and then evaluate current Ministry performance with information from the 2008 survey;
- provide information that will help the Ministry and the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) make decisions to achieve the goal of enhanced client service and experience; and,
- gain information concerning recent changes in farming practices as a result of funding or information received from the Ministry.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, City of Bridges

Measure

Amount of industry investment leveraged by Ministry research and development funding.

In 2012-13, Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) project funding leveraged $11.3 million from other sources.
In 2010-11, ADF project funding leveraged $7.7 million from other sources.

Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Measure Description

The agriculture sector continues to receive significant benefits from the Government's commitment to invest in research infrastructure, intellectual capacity and research projects. Ministry-supported research activities since 1971 have led to the development of more than 300 new crop varieties for Saskatchewan producers.

The Ministry's ADF is focused on supporting the industry's research priorities to ensure Saskatchewan producers have access to new and innovative knowledge and technologies.

The Ministry has established this measure to monitor its progress in supporting the research priorities of the agricultural industry. This measure also demonstrates the collaboration and coordination of research activities across various funding organizations present in the Province.

There is no minimum or maximum leverage for an individual project. For some there may be zero leverage due to the nature of the research and the ability of the industry to support the research. Conversely, for other multi-partnered projects there may be multi-fold leverage. Due to the nature of the research, the leverage could vary from one year to another. The Ministry is optimistic that over the next four years, on average, ADF investment (research projects) will be able to leverage 75 per cent funding (cash and in-kind) from other sources.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Over the Hill Orchards

Measure

Public understanding of agriculture as measured by the percentage of Saskatchewan residents with a positive perception of agriculture.

An initial survey of residents is planned to establish baseline.

Measure Description

Agriculture has played a critical role in Saskatchewan's growth and identity. Today, agriculture is a progressive and economically crucial part of Saskatchewan, yet the industry faces a lack of public knowledge, widespread misinformation and a lack of public interest in the field as a career.

The average citizen is removed from direct food production. Often, it is sensational media stories that influence the public's opinion of the agriculture industry and our food supply. As a result, the public is liable to be exposed to information that may be erroneous, inaccurate, fabricated or biased.

An environmental scan conducted by the Ministry in 2011 revealed that agricultural knowledge is low among the general Canadian population and careers in the field are seen as undesirable. The majority of Saskatchewan residents are disconnected from food production and have lost sight of the agricultural production to consumption chain which has a major impact on Saskatchewan's economy.

The Ministry of Agriculture is working to provide the public with information about the importance, relevance and sustainability of the province's agricultural industry in order to improve the public understanding of agriculture-related issues.

A survey of Saskatchewan residents will take place in order to substantiate the Ministry's understanding of public perceptions of agriculture, and inform the next steps required in an agricultural awareness strategy.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Jones Peak, near Eastend

Measure

Percentage of Government trade missions that promote Saskatchewan agriculture.

In 2012-13, 50 per cent of Government trade missions promoted agriculture, including the Premier's trade mission to Asia; the New West Partnership agriculture mission to China, Japan and South Korea; and the Deputy Minister's mission to Singapore and Indonesia. Twenty-five per cent of the 2011 Government trade missions promoted agriculture.

Measure Description

Saskatchewan's agriculture industry is highly dependent on export markets. 2011 was the first year that Saskatchewan agriculture exports exceeded $10 billion, which included exports of more than $100 million to 20 different countries.

Competition for critical and developing international markets is intense. Government trade missions, including missions focused on market development, market access and trade policy or a combination of all three, are important for maintaining and building on the province's exports.

Trade missions incorporating market development activities support industry by promoting Saskatchewan agriculture's strengths in addition to building and strengthening the industry's reputation for consistent, high quality, safe products. Trade missions incorporating market access and trade policy activities aid in maintaining and securing better market access. Trade missions can also further Saskatchewan's agriculture interests on regulatory matters and influence federal trade policy and the policies of key trade partners.

The Ministry of Agriculture supports trade missions through the development of professional, high quality promotional material and collaborative work with other ministries, industry, provinces and the federal government in advance of, as part of, and in follow-up to trade missions. Other support activities include providing trade statistics, background information, technical support and collaborating on messaging. In 2012-13, the Ministry launched the International Market Development Program to help industry develop new and existing markets and attract buyers to the province.

The percentage of government trade missions that incorporate agriculture provides a proxy measure of the Ministry's market development, market access and trade policy activities. Ministry officials will engage with other ministries to ensure government trade missions include a focus on agriculture.

Financial Summary

2013-14 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	10,813
Policy and Planning	3,607
Research and Technology	27,704
Regional Services	40,116
Land Management	8,345
Industry Assistance	7,171
Financial Programs	26,478
Business Risk Management	282,520
Appropriation	**406,754**
Capital Asset Acquisitions	(2,000)
Capital Asset Amortization	2,106
Expense	**406,860**
FTE Staff Complement	**404.9**

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2013-14

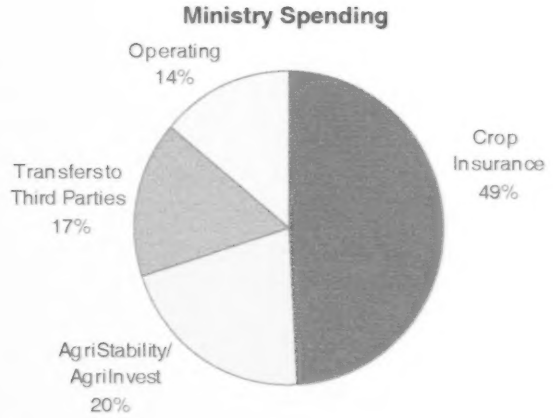

Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine site

Highlights

2013-14 Budget Highlights:

- $282.5 million to fully fund the Province's 40 per cent share of business risk management programs. This includes record funding for Crop Insurance, as well as fully funding AgriStability and AgriInvest.
- $27.7 million to support agricultural research and development, including $3.0 million in funding for the Global Institute for Food Security.
- $3.5 million for third-party grants to a variety of agricultural organizations to develop and promote the industry.
- More than $70 million in Growing Forward 2 funding for the areas of agriculture innovation, research and technology transfer; environment; farm business management; rural water infrastructure; food safety, plant and animal health; value-added business development; trade and market development; and agriculture awareness initiatives.
- $1 million for the rehabilitation of irrigation bridges.

For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca for more information on the Ministry's programs and services.

Front Page Photo Credits

Canola and flax fields	*Biking, Narrow Hills Provincial Park*	*Over the Hill Orchards*	*Saskatchewan Legislative Building*
Photographer, Charles Melnick	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*